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General Assembly

FORTY-NINTH SESSION

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THIRD COMMITTEE
2nd meeting
held on
Tuesday, 4 October 1994
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. CISSE (Senegal)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

1. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee's agenda for the forty-ninth session contained a number of items that would have an impact on two conferences that were of crucial importance for the future of international cooperation: the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women. With goodwill on the part of all, solutions could be found to the difficult questions in the field of human rights. It was hoped that the Committee would be able to conduct its work in a spirit of order, discipline and tolerance and achieve agreement on the issues under consideration.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

2. The CHAIRMAN said that the Group of Western European and Other States had proposed Mr. Biggar (Ireland), and the Asian Group of States had proposed Mr. Srivihok (Thailand) for the offices of Vice-Chairmen.

3. Mr. Biggar (Ireland) and Mr. Srivihok (Thailand) were elected Vice-Chairmen by acclamation.

4. The CHAIRMAN said that Mr. Lepeshko (Belarus) had been proposed by the Group of Eastern European States for the office of Rapporteur.

5. Mr. Lepeshko (Belarus) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.

6. Mr. SRIVIHOK (Thailand), Vice-Chairman, said that promoting the economic and social advancement of all peoples was equally important as maintaining international peace and security. The recognition that national security was inextricably linked to social concerns had brought social and humanitarian issues to the top of the international agenda. No longer fettered by conflicting ideologies, the United Nations had begun the process of restructuring and revitalization and had started to address the issue of sustainable development as the foundation for every society.

7. The work of the Committee was pivotal in that regard and it should be at the centre of efforts to improve the world social situation. Although the cold war had ended, the war on poverty, drugs, crime, racial discrimination and human rights abuses must continue. The end of the cold war had brought about a unique opportunity for promoting genuine global peace and prosperity. He looked forward to working together with the other members of the Committee at the current session to address a number of pressing social concerns and find concrete solutions to those problems.

8. Mr. BIGGAR (Ireland), Vice-Chairman, said that the Committee's agenda at the current session was extensive and he looked forward to a spirited discussion of the items under consideration in an atmosphere of friendly cooperation.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (A/49/251; A/C.3/49/1 and 2; A/C.3/49/L.1 and Add.1)

9. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the letter dated 23 September 1994 from the President of the General Assembly addressed to the Chairman of the Third Committee (A/C.3/49/1), which contained the list of items on the agenda allocated to the Committee and referred to the recommendations on the organization of the session contained in section II of the report of the General Committee (A/49/250) as well as paragraph 36 of section IV and paragraph 44 of section V concerning the agenda of the Main Committees. Those recommendations had been approved by the General Assembly at its third plenary meeting and the President of the General Assembly requested cooperation in implementing them.

10. Delegations were reminded of the utmost importance of punctuality in the interest of ensuring effective and orderly organization of work and were requested to make full use of the number of meetings allotted to the Committee. The General Assembly had waived the requirement of the presence of one quarter of the members of Main Committees to declare a meeting open and permit the debate to proceed. The requirement of the presence of a majority of the members for any decision to be taken would be maintained. In accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote should be limited to 10 minutes. At the suggestion of the Secretary-General, the General Committee had recommended that points of order should be limited to five minutes.

11. The General Assembly had decided to recess its forty-ninth session no later than Tuesday, 28 December 1994, and close on Monday, 18 September 1995. The target date for conclusion of the work of the Committee was Friday, 9 December.

12. He drew the Committee's attention to a letter addressed to him from the Chairman of the Fifth Committee (A/C.3/49/2), requesting that the views of the Committee on the proposed revisions to the relevant programmes of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 should be communicated to him as soon as possible. The Bureau would discuss that matter and put forward proposals to the Committee to facilitate the discharge of its responsibilities in that regard.

13. He announced that the meeting would be suspended to enable the Committee to meet informally in order to consider the programme of work.

The meeting was suspended at 10.45 a.m. and resumed at 11.20 a.m.

14. The CHAIRMAN said that he took it that the Committee wished to adopt its programme of work (A/C.3/49/L.1), as revised during the informal meeting, which included suspension of the meetings of the Third Committee for the week of 24 October in order to allow time for the informal inter-sessional consultations of the Preparatory Committee for the World Social Summit.

15. Mr. FERNANDEZ-PALACIOS (Cuba) said that his delegation was prepared to accept the draft programme of work provided that the Bureau put forward proposals on the inclusion of agenda items 105 and 108 as his delegation had proposed.

16. It was so decided.

17. The CHAIRMAN said that he took it that the Committee agreed that it would consider the work of the Working Group under the new sub-item 100 (d).

18. It was so decided.

19. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the question of setting time-limits for the length of statements on agenda items. In document A/C.3/49/L.1, the Secretariat suggested that the time-limit for statements should be set at 10 minutes, with the exception of statements made by the spokesmen of groups of delegations, which would be set at 15 minutes.

20. Mr. FERNANDEZ-PALACIOS (Cuba) urged delegations associated with group statements to refrain from repeating those views in individual statements, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/140, on rationalization of the work of the Third Committee.

21. It was so decided.

22. The CHAIRMAN said that, in accordance with established practice, the number of statements in exercise of the right of reply for any delegation at a given meeting should be limited to two per item. The first right of reply should be no longer than five minutes and the second right of reply should not exceed three minutes. Lastly, he took it that the Committee wished to extend invitations to the various special rapporteurs and representatives to present their reports to the Committee at the current session.

23. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.